

Accessing Resources for Needs of Children and Families and Use of Federal Grant Funds to Support Client Needs

By Cosette Mills, DCFS Federal Revenue Manager

Several factors should be considered when determining the best sources for funding to address needs of children and families being served by DCFS. A child and family's individualized needs, available resources for the specific types of needs, child and family members' eligibility, maximizing funds first from sources other than State general funds, and following state procurements requirements should all be taken into account. Needs and potential resources should be discussed in the context of the Child and Family Team. No approval may be granted for funding in excess of limits established for specific programs or services.

1. Preferred Precedence for Use of Resources and Funding

Generally, there is preferred precedence for use of funding. When followed, it enables DCFS to have the maximum possible funds to serve children and families.

- A. Access services normally provided through another agency from that agency.
- B. Use Title IV-E or Medicaid funds for children who meet eligibility requirements and for costs allowable under those programs.
- C. Use Federal grant or private foundation funds, if available (see table below).
- D. Use state general funds as a last resort.

2. Sources for Goods and Services

Goods and services used to serve children and families must be purchased in accordance with standard State procurement requirements. Consult with regional fiscal staff to ensure regional processes are followed and procurement requirements are met. Examples of some applicable procurement requirements are listed below.

A. Goods and Services Through Contracts

If a child or family needs goods or services that are available through existing State Purchasing contracts, then the goods or services must be accessed through those contract providers.

Below is a short list of some of the items available through State of Utah Purchasing contracts:

Athletic equipment
Auto body repair
Automotive batteries
Carpet and upholstery cleaning
Child safety seats, car seats
Misc. food Items (usually in bulk)
Car tires and repairs
Automotive windshield

Audio-visual equipment
Automotive brake service
Bus passes
Cell phone service
Computer/printers
Wrecker Services
Paint and related items
Wheelchairs and Accessories

To search for specific contracts check the purchasing website: <http://purchasing.utah.gov/bidprocessing/ContractSearch.asp>

In general, if an item is something that would be used on a regular basis by state offices or institutions, it is probably on a contract. If it is a unique purchase for a specific item, it is probably not on contract. If the item **IS** on a state contract, work with your fiscal staff to contact the person listed for that contract for instructions on how to access the needed goods or services. If a contract for a good or services does not meet the child or family's needs as it is set up, use of the contract is not required; however, justification must be documented.

DCFS also contracts for many services as well. If services are available through Division contracts, then these should be used before going to outside sources also.

B. Goods and Services Not Available Through Contracts

1. Goods or services totaling less than \$1000 and not available through State Purchasing contracts may be purchased without seeking bids from multiple vendors.
2. Generally, at least two, preferably three, bids must be obtained if cost will be between \$1,000 and \$2,000. The bids may be verbal, but must be documented and attached to the "One Time Payment" form requesting payment.
3. Written bids are required for costs in excess of \$2,000. A formal bid process is required for costs in excess of \$5,000.
4. The region is responsible to ensure purchases are reasonable and appropriate and that procurement requirements are followed.

3. Recipient of Payment

Careful consideration must be given when deciding if a payment will be made to a provider or directly to a client. Payment to the provider is generally preferred. However, there may be rare instances when payment to the client is appropriate. Payments should only be made directly to the client when payment to the client is an essential part of the client's service plan and the Division has confidence the funds will be handled responsibly. The decision to make a payment to a client must be part of the region's funding approval process and must be documented. Payments made directly to clients are usually considered income to the client and may be taxable. Payments to a client may also affect the client's eligibility for Medicaid or other benefits.

4. Approval and Payment Process

- A. Each region is responsible to have in place a process to approve payments recommended by the caseworker and/or Child and Family Team. Several levels of approval authority may be established, generally based on amount or type of payments.
- B. Special needs and some grant payments are processed utilizing a "One Time Payment" form.

5. Emergency Needs

If emergency needs arise in which immediate funding is required, the standard over-the-counter check process will be used. Consistent with Department requirements, funding is limited to \$500 through the over-the-counter check process.

6. Grant Resources to Support Individual Client Needs

Some Federal grant funds are available to support client needs. The table below indicates grant resources that may be available based upon type of program clients are participating in.

| Service Code | Description | Allowable Services | Who Qualifies & Case Types | Funding Limit | Additional Considerations |
|--------------|--|--|--|-----------------------|--|
| FPA | Adoption Promotion and Support Flex Fund This funding is for post-adoption support for | Examples of use of funding may include respite care, crisis assistance, behavioral management, services to supplement adoption assistance, and other unique wrap-around or one time costs or services. Funds may also be | Adoptive clients and their families open for a case type of SCF, PSS, PSC, PFP, PAT, | Maximum amount \$2000 | First preference is to pay provider, not client. When paid directly to a client, may be taxable. |

| Service Code | Description | Allowable Services | Who Qualifies & Case Types | Funding Limit | Additional Considerations |
|--------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|---|
| | adoptive families | used for adoptive parent training, support groups, and newsletters. | or AAM | | |
| FPF | Family Preservation Flex Fund This funding is for unique services that help strengthen and preserve families or for one-time costs to help stabilize a family. | Examples of services may include unique wrap-around services for a child or family, or may include tangible goods or services such as paying for deposit or first month's rent when housing is one of the reasons a child cannot be returned home, or bedding, or other furniture or personal items needed for a child or parent. | Client open for case types of CPS, SCF, PSS, PSC, PSI, PFP, PFR, CCS, CIS, CFA, PEI, PAT, AAM, GAM | Maximum amount \$2000 | First preference is to pay provider, not client. When paid directly to a client, may be taxable. |
| FPR | Time-Limited Reunification Funds The purpose of this funding is to meet treatment needs for foster children or their parents or primary caregivers to help facilitate safe reunification. | Services may be provided to the foster child or the child's parents or primary caregiver from the month of removal through the 15 month after a child entered foster care. Funding may be used for one or a combination of services, and may be provided by DCFS staff or through contract. Time-limited reunification funding may be used for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual, group, and family counseling or other mental health services. 2. Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services including such expenses as initial fees and costs associated with drug courts and drug testing. 3. Services to provide temporary child protective childcare or other therapeutic services, including crisis nurseries. 4. Assistance to address domestic violence | Clients open for case types of SCF or FPR | Maximum amount \$2000 | While this funding will most often be used with out of home cases, if children have returned home from foster care and it is still less than 15 months from the time they were removed, funds may be used for treatment needs of the former foster child or parents for transition and stabilization so the children can safely remain at home (and prevent re-entry into foster care). |

| Service Code | Description | Allowable Services | Who Qualifies & Case Types | Funding Limit | Additional Considerations |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | treatment or service needs. 5. Transportation to or from above services and activities. | | | |
| TLN | Transitional Living Needs Funds may be used to address unique short and long-term needs of youth in DCFS custody to assist them in transitioning to adulthood. | Funds may be spent for needs in the following categories: 1) Education, training, and career exploration, 2) Physical, mental health, and emotional support, 3) Transportation, and 4) Housing support. | Youth open for case type of SCF | Up to \$1000 with IL Coordinator approval Up to \$2000 with CSM or RD approval Up to \$3000 with RD, DCFS Director, and Dept approval | May not be used for room and board costs such as food, rent, and utilities. Amounts over \$2000 must be approved and processed by the Department. |
| SIL | Special Independent Living Payment Funds are used as an incentive payment for youth completing IL training. | Incentive payment for youth who complete the IL training. May be paid in a lump sum or broken up into several payments. | Youth with case type of SCF | USSDS maximum is \$999 but most regions limit to about \$700 | Payments to youth must be counted as income for benefits. If paid in lump sum, may cause loss of Medicaid eligibility. |
| TLP | Transitional Living Payment Funds may be used to address unique short-term need of youth who have left foster care to assist them in transitioning to adulthood. Youth must have been foster care on | May be used for the same types of costs as TLN (see above). May also be used for assistance with room and board costs. | Youth must have been in foster care on their 18 th birthday and may continue through age 21 and must have an open case type of CIS. | Maximum amount \$2000 | First preference is to pay provider, not client. When paid directly to a client, may be taxable. |

| Service Code | Description | Allowable Services | Who Qualifies & Case Types | Funding Limit | Additional Considerations |
|---------------------|---|--|--|----------------------|--|
| | their 18 th birthday and may continue through age 21. | | | | |
| None | Education and Training Voucher Program Funds assist youth to obtain post-secondary training to help with transition to adulthood. | Provides former foster youth with financial resources for postsecondary education and vocational training necessary to obtain employment or to support employment goals. | Youth must have been in foster care on their 18 th birthday or must have been adopted at age 16 or older and must have made application for funds by age 21. Funding may continue through age 23. | \$5000 per year | ETV services are accessed through the Department of Workforce Services. High school graduation or GED must be completed. Also requires 2.0 or C average be maintained. |